

Auburn Planning Board Meeting Minutes December 8, 2015

Roll Call

Regular Members present: Mia Poliquin-Pross, Robert Bowyer, Evan Cyr, Ken Bellefleur Presiding, Dan Philbrick and Marc Tardif

Regular Members absent: 1 vacancy

Associate Members present: Elaine Wickman and Nathan Hamlyn

Associate Members absent: None

Also present representing City staff: Douglas Greene, City Planner

Chairperson Bellefleur called the meeting to order and explained the procedure that is used for Public Hearings.

Public Hearings & New Business:

The Auburn Planning Board will hold a public hearing and consider making a recommendation to the City Council of the final draft for a Form Based Code Text Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment for portions of Downtown Auburn and New Auburn. The Form Based Code Text Amendment will replace Division 14, Central Business District, amend related sections of the Zoning Ordinance and create 5 new Form Based Code Districts (T-4.1, T-4.2, T-5.1, T-5.2 and T-6).

Douglas explained reasons why letters were sent out to all of the property owners affected by the Form Based Code and then presented slides via PowerPoint.

(39:20 on DVD)

Open Public Input

Robert Limoges of 220 Main Street asked when this will take effect. Douglas replied this is still a draft but the Planning Board could make this the final Public Hearing by sending a recommendation on to the City Council. The City Council would decide when to have a workshop and then a Public Hearing would follow so the timeline is not clear yet. He said he would hope in January they would begin hearing this. He explained the City Council would be voting on a text amendment to have the Form Based Code replace the Central Business District and would also be voting on a map amendment.

David Rogers mentioned that he and his partner had restored 3 of the historic buildings on Main Street in the proposed T-4.1 area and they also helped develop the Downtown Enterprise Zone. He said the floor elevation above grade seems to be contrary to the ability to make buildings accessible. He mentioned there were 3 areas of concern: 1) Fire Access; less than 5 feet between buildings, 2) Light Access; should be considered when placing houses on individual lots so you

aren't cutting the light to another neighboring building, 3) Reduced Parking; most people have 2 cars per single family dwelling so the City should be more aggressive in creating parking areas within those spaces so parking needs are met more consistently than just what the code requires otherwise people park on lawns, etc... He said otherwise, it's a terrific approach and mentioned having just watched a video on this from Raleigh, North Carolina.

(46:35 on DVD)

Anthony White of 124 Newbury Street complained about the lack of available parking in Auburn and of the streets being too narrow. He said businesses on Main Street could not survive because customers did not have enough parking. He also mentioned that public transportation was horrible in Auburn. Douglas explained that when new development happens for the proposed Downtown City Center, the City has a commitment to build a parking garage and there is planning being done to create as much on-street parking as possible along with that.

Robert Bowyer added that we are consciously trying to create a down town urban pedestrian oriented environment and the automobile is a challenge. He explained a great deal of the parking would be satisfied in common parking facilities such as parking garages and noted the numerous parking garages in the City of Lewiston. Douglas added we also want to encourage shared parking between businesses and while we are recommending reduced parking requirements, we are not prohibiting somebody from adding more parking spaces if they feel they need to provide more for their business.

(56:15 on DVD)

A gentleman from Third Street asked if the Board members had considered the fact that there were a lot more elderly people than young people here and that the weather in the northeast can be pretty nasty so people in their 60s, 70s, and 80s walking can be hazardous if the sidewalks aren't kept clean. He mentioned businesses would come to a grinding halt if older people would be made to walk further in the winter instead of being able to park closer to the business. Douglas responded saying new construction must meet ADA requirements. The city is doing what it can to maximize street parking; handicapped spaces definitely need to be considered close to entrances as much as possible.

Evan Cyr explained that developers develop things to make money so for any retail development; the developer would provide adequate parking to ensure success of that business.

Robert Bowyer spoke about the development currently being proposed on Spring Street and how that may be a sample of buildings that accommodate provision of parking, the street level activity, the kind of wall effect that we want, and living spaces for people of all ages. He added that Form Based Code is a long process so changing downtown Auburn won't happen overnight.

A gentleman from the audience asked which part of the City would be seeing changes first. Douglas answered the City does not have direct influence on the development of these areas but it will do what it can to encourage it. He spoke about some potential redevelopment currently in the works.

(1:12:30 on DVD)

A motion was made by Evan Cyr and seconded by Robert Bowyer to close the public input part of the meeting. After a vote of 7-0-0, the motion carried.

(1:17:00 on DVD)

The Board members and staff discussed at length, various parts of the draft. Douglas used the PowerPoint slides to facilitate the discussion. The following are some of the topics discussed:

- Residential type uses (Community based residential facility)
- Places of worship - defined (churches)
- Personal services - defined
- Art galleries
- Boarding – lodging houses
- If a use is not listed, does that mean it is not allowed
- Financial/professional offices defined
- Height of floors

(02:24:10 on DVD)

A motion was made by Evan Cyr and seconded by Dan Philbrick to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council. After a vote of 7-0-0, the motion carried.

Douglas said he would update the draft and give a copy to the Board members for final review before sending on to the City Council.

Minutes:

No minutes to vote on at this time.

Old Business:

None

(02:31:35 on DVD)

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Evan Cyr and seconded by Mia Poliquin Pross to adjourn. After a vote of 7-0-0, the motion carried.